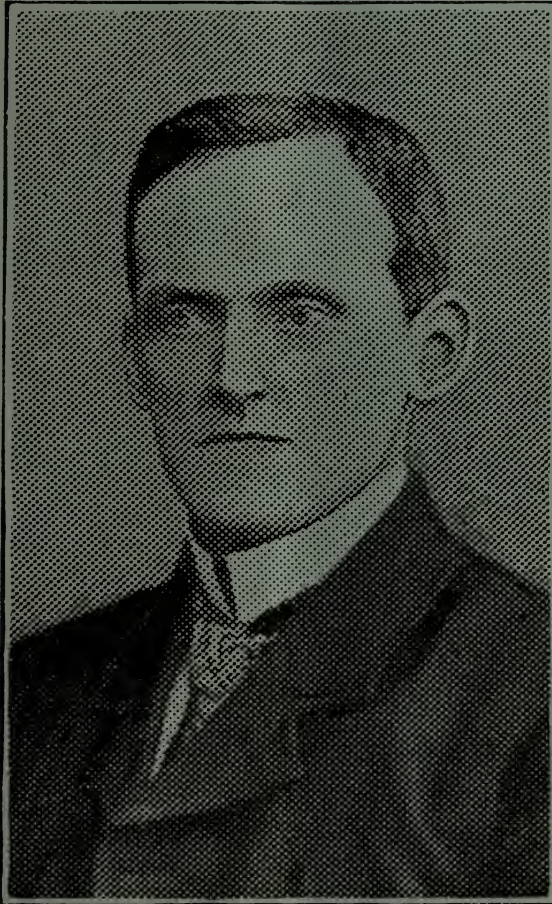


Socialism & Teetotalism



BY
Philip Snowden M.P.

Published by the Independent
Labour Party, 23, Bride Lane,
Fleet Street, London, E.C.

1909,

1d.

The complex and difficult problem of

The Drink Traffic

is always with us. Social Reformers and Politicians of all schools of thought are focussing their attention on this great question. :: :: ::

The book to read on the subject is

Socialism and the Drink Question

BY PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.

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In this volume the Drink problem is attacked from the Socialist point of view. The Economic, Social, and Moral aspects of the question are carefully examined. Special attention is given to Social and Industrial conditions as the cause of the drinking habit.

The relationship between Drink, Crime, Disease, and Lunacy is analysed. A criticism is made of the Temperance Movement and of orthodox proposals for the abolition of the Drink Evil. The book is admitted to be a splendid exposition of the case for the Municipalisation of the Drink Traffic. It is an authoritative and timely statement of the position taken up by the Socialists on this question as against the position occupied by orthodox Temperance Reformers.

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Socialism and Teetotalism.*

The charge is often made against the Socialists that they ignore the importance of the Drink Curse and relegate it to a mere trivial issue of the capitalistic system. It is doubtless true that drinking is too infrequently condemned from Socialist platforms, and that when the subject is referred to there is often a disposition to put the whole blame for personal drinking on the "system." This disinclination on the part of some Socialists to recognise the individual side of the drink question is much to be deplored, for it tends to encourage personal indulgence and to furnish the drinker with the convenient excuse that he is the unfortunate victim of conditions, when as a matter of fact he is often the victim of his own selfish appetite and the willing slave of his own evil passions.

But, notwithstanding, there is no set of individuals who better show by their own lives and conduct than the Socialists that temperance is possible for the workman under the present system, and that its practice is beneficial to the individual and to the movement. The Independent Labour Party, which is the chief Socialist body in Britain, contains among its membership a larger proportion of abstainers than any other political organisation in the country. Drink is sold in less than three per cent. of its clubs, and the Annual Conferences of the Party have passed resolutions deploring the association of drink, even to this extent, with the movement.

The growth of temperance sentiment in the working class movements within recent years has been most gratifying. Every man who has occupied the chair of the Trades Union Congress in the last six years has been a total abstainer. The majority of the Labour M.P's are also abstainers. The practice of holding Trade Union meetings in public houses is being abandoned; and so much is it desired to keep the organisations away from the drink that in 1906 the Trade Union Congress passed a resolution in favour of seeking the use of municipal rooms for Trade Union meetings. The Labour Party Conferences have passed strongly-worded resolutions denouncing the liquor traffic as a fruitful source of poverty, crime, and lunacy, and demanding measures of Temperance reform.

The Continental Socialists are alive to the hindrance which

* This pamphlet is in the main a digest of the writer's "Socialism and the Drink Question," to which the interested reader is referred for a fuller statement of the problem.

drink is to the progress of Socialist ideas. The great leaders of Belgian, Swiss, and Austrian Socialism—M. Vandervelde, Dr. Otto Lang, and Dr. Victor Adler, are very energetic Temperance advocates. Resolutions against alcoholism have been passed by Congresses of the Belgian, Scandinavian, Austrian, Swiss and German Socialists. There is a rapidly growing sentiment against alcohol among the continental Socialists. The young men who are coming into the movement, are mainly abstainers. This is largely due to the leaders, who lay great stress upon the fact that the workers need all their powers in the fight for Socialism, and that drinking reduces their physical and mental capacity. There are Socialist Temperance Societies in Sweden, Germany, Austria and Belgium. Selling of alcohol in Socialist clubs is prohibited by resolution of Congress, and this prohibition is generally recognised.

Without detracting at all from the importance of the industrial and social character of the Drink Problem, it is necessary not to forget that the question has a personal side, and that there are few or none of the evils which curse our country to-day which it is so well within the power of the individual to escape from, as from indulgence in drink. A vast amount of drinking is due neither to low wages, to bad housing, hard work, nor the worry of business. It is indulged in thoughtlessly at first, because drinking is supposed to be proof of sociability, and the practice grows and the appetite is fed until it becomes a regular habit.

Leaders of working class movements are being more and more forced to the conclusion that drink is one of the chief hindrances in the way of the betterment of the lot of the masses. It is much more popular to ascribe the responsibility for the vices and indulgences of the workers to the classes who exploit them than to put any part of the blame for their habits and condition upon themselves and their own unwillingness to exert themselves to make the best of their circumstances and opportunities. The evils arising from Drink are so many and so terrible that it is a serious responsibility to take any course of action or make any statements which may provide an excuse for others indulging in liquor. On the contrary, there is rather an obligation resting on all who know how serious are the ravages of the evil, and how many and strong are the temptations to drink, to encourage the weak by the example of abstinence.

Like the Continental Socialists, the leaders of the Labour and Socialist movement in Britain might with advantage lay a little more stress upon the fact that drinking poisons the brains of the workers, reduces their physical strength, wastes their too scanty means, takes away their independent spirit, lowers their ideals, destroys their self respect, and makes them more easily the prey of the sweater and the exploiter.

The declaration of the Labour Conference that Drink is a fruitful source of poverty, crime, and lunacy is supported by overwhelming proof. Drinking drags men down to the gutter from positions of comfort and influence. It is the main cause of petty and serious crime. In the last ten years over 2,000,000 prosecutions for drunkenness have taken place in England and Wales alone. In 1906 there were over 100,000 arrests for drunkenness in Scotland. These figures by no means express fully the extent to which drink employs our courts, and fills our gaols. In addition to these prosecutions for simple drunkenness, many of the cases of assaults were the outcome of drinking. The Report of Judicial Statistics states, "Drunkenness is no doubt the cause of many crimes, and is the accompaniment of many others."

There is a growing consensus of conviction in the medical profession that alcohol is an important cause of physical degeneration, and that it causes many diseases and aggravates others. The Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration which sat in 1903 reported that:—

"The question of drink occupies a prominent place among the causes of degeneration. As the result of the evidence laid before them the Committee are convinced that the abuse of alcoholic stimulants is a most potent and deadly agent of physical deterioration."

In view of the important task before the working classes it is well to recognise that drink is an important cause of mental deficiency in children. The New York Academy of Medicine have examined several thousand school children in that city with a view of ascertaining the connection between alcohol and mental deficiency. The habits of the parents with regard to alcohol was ascertained in 20,147 cases. Of the children of drinking parents 53 per cent. were dullards, while only 10 per cent. of the children of abstaining parents fell within the same class. The family histories of 3,711 children were traced through three generations. Of the children of abstaining parents and abstaining grandparents only 4 per cent. were "dullards," whereas of the children of abstaining parents but drinking grandparents 77 per cent. were dullards.

Drink, according to the Report of the Lunacy Commissioners, is one of the chief causes of insanity. The figures for 1904 assign intemperance as the cause of insanity in 22.7 per cent. of the male admissions during five years and 9.4 of the female.

Some idea of the extent to which drinking by adults is contributing to the mental and physical inefficiency of the next generation may be gathered from the terrible facts disclosed in the Home Office Return (1907) giving information obtained from certain police forces as to the frequenting of public houses by women and children in Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, and Sheffield; 544 public houses were

watched for 18 days, and 26,606 children, mostly under six years of age, were seen to enter.

In the twenty-four years of its work the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has brought to light 1,339,159 cases of brutal treatment of children, and drink is stated to be the cause of this cruelty in 90 per cent. of the cases. Dr. Branthwaite, the Government Inspector under the Inebriates Act, writing of women drunkards guilty of cruelty says: "None of them when sober have exhibited the least tendency to cruelty or desire to neglect their children. None of them would be cruel were they not drunken."

The chances of full development for the children of the workers are small at the best, but in a painfully large number of instances the parents do not give their children the best chances within their means. Any part of the income of a working class family spent on drink is a deduction from expenditure which is necessary, and deprives the children as well as the parents of clothing, food, or better housing.

Drinking brings its victims to an earlier death. A Committee of the British Medical Association in 1887 enquired into "The Connection of Disease with Habits of Intemperance." The conclusion at which this committee arrived was that "habitual indulgence in alcoholic liquors beyond the most moderate amount has a distinct tendency to shorten life,—and that of men who have passed the age of 25, the strictly temperate, on the average, live at least ten years longer than those who become decidedly intemperate."

The Socialist movement appeals especially to the young. It is upon their work and their devotion to the cause that the future of Socialism depends. Those who are going to lead others must have learnt to master themselves. The Socialist youth must have nothing to do with the drink. The young man who drinks at all is always in danger of passing completely under the control of the drink appetite. From 15 to 25 is the most dangerous period. Dr. Coulston, of the Royal Asylum, Edinburgh, writes: "The age at which the craving for stimulants and the want of control over that craving is established in 90 cases out of 100 is during the adolescent era of life between 15 and 25."

Alcohol does not make a man fitter. Sir Victor Horsley says "even small quantities of alcohol diluted with water lower the quality of intellectual work." The same eminent authority writes in regard to the effect of alcohol on muscular work, "It is now beyond question that alcohol even in so-called dietetic quantities, diminishes the output of muscular work both in quantity and quality, and that the best physical results are obtained under total abstinence from its use."

If a man wants to make the best of himself, if he wants to be his best so that he serve others well, if he wants to live

long for useful service, if he wants to teach by example as well as by precept he will avoid the drink. The workers have a hard, a serious, and a long battle to fight, and, handicapped as they are by industrial and social disadvantages which they cannot individually remove, it is all the more necessary for them to strenuously resist temptation to indulge in a practice which cannot conceivably benefit them in any way, but which wastes their meagre means, ruins their minds and bodies, and lessens their power to fight for better conditions.

So far the individual side of the Drink Question has been considered. But the Socialist is justified in laying special emphasis on the industrial and social phases of this problem. While not forgetting to appeal to the individual on behalf of personal abstinence, the Socialist must persistently call attention to the root and contributory causes of drunkenness. The drink evil cannot be successfully treated without regard to the relation of this matter to other industrial and social conditions.

So long as the people live unnatural lives they will have unnatural cravings—excessive tea drinking, the taste for highly seasoned foods, gambling, love of sensationalism, all arise from the same causes as the desire and liking for alcohol. We must get deeper than the mere presence of the public house to find the causes of drinking. The influences which drive men to drink are many and varied. Most persons now will admit that poor and squalid surroundings, and hard work under severe conditions have much to do with the drinking habits of the working class. Medical men, Royal Commissioners, social workers, housing reformers, educationalists, labour leaders—all confess that drink and poverty are intimately associated.

When speaking of the connection between Poverty and Drink the Socialist does not limit the meaning of the word poverty to the amount of wages a person receives. By poverty is meant low wages in so far as the wages are inadequate to provide for the satisfaction of healthy wants, but included in the meaning of the word are the conditions under which the wage is earned, long hours, insanitary conditions, exhausting and mechanical toil—bad housing, bad food, bad cooking, lack of home comforts, lack of education, an inability to take an interest in elevating things or healthy pastimes, the worry and uncertainty and struggle of present day life. By poverty as a factor in the drink question the Socialists mean the results of commercialism and competition upon the lives of the people.

To reply to the contention that poverty causes drinking, by pointing to instances where men with high wages drink, and to others where men with low wages are sober, is no valid answer. It is not so much the money value of the wage as the conditions under which the wage is earned and the outside opportunities and associations of the individual. If a

man or a class lack education and loftiness of ideal, the higher the wages of their labour, the more they will spend in satisfying their "sordid appetites." It is precisely what one would expect, that times of good trade are characterised by an increased expenditure upon drink. The higher wages have come, but the wisdom to spend them has lingered. It should be remembered, too, that the higher wages earned under good trade are obtained at the cost of greater effort. This leads to greater physical exhaustion, and to drink for stimulation. The cause is poverty—poverty of leisure, poverty of wisdom.

Opposites produce like results. Too much work brings physical exhaustion and weakens the moral strength; produces, in short, a state where the individual becomes an easy victim to drink. Too little work encourages laziness, weakens the moral force, produces a like condition to that just described. Nothing is more speedily destructive of effort to rise superior to one's condition than the apparent hopelessness of success. The instability and irregularity of employment in these days are responsible for much of the absence of self-respect and lack of ambition among the poor.

The influences which under the general term of poverty have been described as tending to cause drinking are by no means confined in their operation to the wage earning class. Every section of the community, from the richest to the poorest, are influenced in their lives, characters, tastes, vices, and indulgences by the general conditions and customs of the age. The rich drink as well as the poor, and in a very real sense it is the poverty of the rich which is the cause of their drinking. They lack a worthy ideal, they are enervated and demoralised by idleness and luxury. The anxiety and worry of business, its increasingly speculative character, the hurry and anxiety to get rich, are unnerving the commercial classes and driving them to drink and suicide.

It is scarcely necessary to qualify the foregoing statements by mentioning that not all the individuals who compose the respective classes fall under the influences which others do not or cannot resist. Every man's environment is a combination of innumerable influences—some degrading, some exalting. Every man varies in his power to resist or to select. The drink curse preys upon the weakness of the individual.

Whatever conditions, whether they be in the factory or in the home, which tend to enfeeble the health encourage indulgence in drink. There is a close connection between the degree of drinking and the exhausting nature of an occupation. The greater the strain, the more intemperance prevails. The United States Labour Commissioner has published some figures giving the percentage of wages spent on drink by the workers in several occupations in this country and in America. The percentage of wages spent on drink for the cotton, woollen,

iron, and glass trades is lowest in the woollen; the cotton comes next, being a little higher than the woollen; the iron trade is 100 per cent. above the woollen; and the glass trade is 40 per cent. above the high percentage attributed to the iron workers. Every one acquainted with the character of the respective occupations will recognise the approximation of the expenditure upon drink to the strain of the work.

Many Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees have called attention to the connection between drinking and bad housing. The Physical Degeneration Committee say, "Every step gained towards the solution of the Housing Problem is something won for sobriety."

The following table showing the proportion of convictions for drunkenness and the percentage of overcrowding brings out very strikingly the connection between the two things.

| | | | Total number of persons overcrowded. | Percentage of total popula- tion over- crowded. | Convictions for drunkenness per 10,000 of population. |
|------------|-----|-----|--|--|--|
| Sunderland | ... | ... | 43,976 | 30.1 | 104 |
| Newcastle | ... | ... | 65,605 | 30.5 | 137 |
| Tynemouth | ... | ... | 15,777 | 30.7 | 351 |
| Gateshead | ... | ... | 37,957 | 34.5 | 100 |
| Cardiff | ... | ... | 7,052 | 4.3 | 5.5 |

The number of convictions for drunkenness per 10,000 of population in 1907 for England and Wales was 60.5.

One of the main causes of intemperance may therefore be put down as the industrial and social conditions of the people. This being so, it becomes the duty of every would-be temperance reformer to be active in the work of social reform. The following items should be on the programme of every Temperance organisation: (1). Better Wages. (2). Shorter Hours. (3). Abolition of casual work and unemployment. (4). Better Housing. (5). Physical and Health Education.

The average wages of the manual workers are too low, however wisely they may be spent, to provide a sufficiency of good food, of good clothing, of house accommodation, and of other necessities. Wages are too low to rear healthy children upon. Poverty compels the family to live in an overcrowded condition in an insanitary neighbourhood. The result of the combination of overcrowding and insufficient nourishment is to starve the children who, if they grow up, do so with enfeebled constitutions which render them liable to fall to the temptation of drink. A State which was alive to the value of making the best of its material would lay down that the first charge upon all production was a wage which would in every case be at least sufficient to maintain the worker and his dependants in a state of health and comfort.

The reduction of the hours of labour is a temperance

reform of the first importance. Wherever a shorter working day has been adopted one result has been greater sobriety among the workers affected by the reduction of hours. Mr. John Rae writing in the *Economic Journal* on the Eight Hours Day in Australia says that largely as a result of the Eight Hours day there is growing up in that country a working class population which for intelligence and sobriety have no equals among the Anglo-Saxon race, and the like of which has never been seen in the world before. He mentions the very significant fact that the people who oppose the Shorter Day in Australia are the publicans, for they have discovered that when a man leaves work not completely exhausted, but with a little vitality left, he has no desire to spend his time sitting in a public house, but feels impelled to take some outdoor recreation or to engage in some mental study.

Experience of the Eight Hours Day in this country brings one to a similar conclusion. Sir John Brunner says that the adoption of shorter hours at their works has brought an immense change for the better. Formerly the time lost by the men was very considerable and was almost entirely caused by insobriety. Before the adoption of the Eight Hours system the time lost averaged 7.3 days per man per year. In 1906 the lost time was but 0.3 of a day per man. Sir William Mather (of the engineering firm of Mather and Platt) states that since his firm adopted the Eight Hours Day in 1894 a great many of the public houses which then surrounded the works have had to close their doors.

Reference has already been made to the importance of good housing as an aid to sobriety. Confirmation of this was given some time ago by the chairman of the Bath Brewery Co., who, speaking to the shareholders about the decrease of drinking said:

He himself thought it was largely due to the better housing of the working class. A man now-a-days, instead of going home to a dirty, untidy cottage, full of children in one room, found his house was more comfortable.

If it were necessary, abundant testimony to the same effect could be given, but only one further piece of evidence need be quoted. A witness before the Small Holdings Committee in 1906 stated on the authority of the Superintendent of Police that the decrease in drunkenness around Catshill was due to the spread of small holdings.

Much requires to be done by education to spread a wider knowledge of the laws of health. The movement for the teaching of temperance hygiene in the schools, and the publication of information by the Health Authorities about the evil effects of alcohol deserve every encouragement. Not merely is knowledge of the laws of health involved in the temperance question, but the whole subject of education too. The ignorant, uneducated man has such a limited number of interests that

drink can easily claim him for its own. The spread of education, with its widening outlook and increase of interests, will do great things for Temperance Reform.

Another very important factor in the drink question is the opportunity, or more correctly the encouragement to drink afforded by the opportunity. There are those who will put themselves to any trouble or inconvenience to get drink, but it is undoubtedly true that the great body of moderate drinkers would never feel the loss of drink if it were removed from their path, and certainly would not put themselves to much inconvenience to get it. But the presence of the public house everywhere is a perpetual invitation to thoughtlessly indulge in drink; and the business of the publican is to encourage his customers to support his trade. This phase of the drink question is within the sphere of legislation and administration. By direct action in removing opportunities and encouragements undoubtedly a large volume of drinking which is not due to deep seated causes would be eliminated.

We propose now to consider what legislative and administrative reforms dealing directly with the Liquor Traffic offer the best prospects of beneficial results.

Orthodox Temperance reformers put their faith in a reduction of the number of licensed houses. The Licensing Bill of 1908, which was accepted by every section of the Temperance party, proposed to attain that object by a statutory period of reduction during which one-third of the existing licenses were to be withdrawn. Nothing in connection with licensing statistics is more unsatisfactory than the relation between the number of licenses and the convictions for drunkenness. From these statistics it is an easy matter to show, by careful selection of districts, that a reduction in the number of licenses, to use the words of Mr. Gladstone, "if it pretends to the honour of a remedy is little better than an imposture."

The "Statistics of Licensing for 1907" gives tables showing the number of licences to population and the number of convictions for drunkenness for each of the counties of England and Wales. The following figures taken from these tables will at least prove that there is no fixed proportion between the number of public houses and convictions for drunkenness:—

| | | | Counties (excluding county boroughs). | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|---|--|
| | | | Number of On-licences per 10,000 Population. | Convictions for Drunkenness per 10,000 Population. |
| Oxford | ... | ... | 64.87 (71.97)* | 11.29 |
| Wilts | ... | ... | 35.17 (41.67) | 12.74 |
| Huntingdon | ... | ... | 95.18 (105.75) | 29.50 |
| Yorkshire, West Riding | ... | ... | 24.60 (32.36) | 74.22 |
| Durham | ... | ... | 23.34 (28.26) | 101.59 |
| Northumberland | ... | ... | 20.25 (23.95) | 146.22 |

*The figures in brackets include "on" licences also.

From the above given figures we see that although the county of Oxford has more than three times the number of public houses to population as compared with Northumberland, yet Northumberland has thirteen times more drunkenness per 10,000 of its population than Oxfordshire, or to put it another way, a Northumberland public house produces 39 times more drunkenness than an Oxford public house. Northumberland has the smallest number of licences to population of any county in England and Wales except Middlesex, and it is by far the most drunken.

We get just the same strange results from an examination of the figures relating to County Boroughs. Here are a few instances :—

| | County Boroughs. | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| | Number of licences per 10,000 Population. | Convictions for Drunkenness per 10,000 Population. |
| Middlesborough ... | 10.71 (16.31)* | 153.95 |
| Cardiff | 14.87 (19.08) | 5.54 |
| Newcastle-on-Tyne | 19.56 (26.60) | 126.17 |
| Oxford City ... | 40.08 (52.41) | 27.94 |
| Tynemouth ... | 31.09 (41.14) | 314.69 |

These figures of course carry us only into chaos. The only conclusion we can draw from them is that there are other causes of drunkenness beside the excessive number of public houses.

But it would not be fair to conclude that there is no connection between the number of public houses and the amount of drunkenness, though in such cases as those given above where the proportion of public houses is small while the amount of drunkenness is great there are other influences actively at work on the side of the brewer and publican. It will be noted that in every instance, with the single exception of Cardiff, which is unique, where drunkenness is excessive, the district or borough is industrial, and all the causes of drinking which have been previously enumerated are in active operation.

Any effective scheme of Temperance reform must contain provisions under which the public can regulate the number of licences. State Prohibition need not here be discussed. There is no such proposal before the country. But Local Option and Local Veto are principles which have repeatedly received the endorsement of the House of Commons by large majorities.

Local Option has the advantage of being adaptable to local conditions, and of providing the means of reducing the number of public houses with the growth of Temperance sentiment in the district. Local Option simply transfers the powers of the licensing justices to the people in the locality.

*The figures in brackets include "on" licences also.

who surely are better judges of their own needs than a bench of magistrates exercising a wide jurisdiction. Opponents of Local Option urge that to give the power to a majority to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquor is a tyrannical interference with individual liberty. The answer to that is that such an objection might have some weight as an argument against State Prohibition, but it cannot tell against Local Option. Local Option is not the prohibition of the use of liquor. The most it could do would be to put a man to a little more trouble to get drink. Local Option is simply giving the power to the people to say whether a public house shall be licensed in a certain place, and what number of such places shall be licensed. The nuisance of a public house in a district where the great majority do not want it, is surely a greater interference with individual comfort than to put a small minority to some little inconvenience by removing it.

The abstract right of conferring the power of Local Option upon the people is unanswerable. The case against Local Option is rather a practical than an abstract one. If Local Option be put forward as a complete legislative scheme of Temperance reform, then much can be said against building one's hopes upon its success. The chief thing at which Temperance reform should aim is to lessen drinking in the poor and densely populated parts of our towns. It is not likely that in such districts the necessary majority for Local Veto could be obtained, nor would the temperance sentiment necessary for enforcing it exist.

Local option laws are in operation in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. A survey of the results of the working of these laws in our colonies brings out one striking fact. The success which has been attained by Local Option has invariably been in thinly populated country districts or in suburban areas where there is a "safety valve" conveniently near. Whenever an attempt has been made to apply Local Veto to a congested population failure has been the result. A Foreign Office Report (Cd. 3284-1) on Local Option in the United States thus sums up the matter:

If the aim of liquor legislation is to bring about a diminution of drinking, it may be said that Local Option, of all the systems in force, effects real Prohibition over the largest possible area with the least possible friction. It is almost invariably found that the towns vote for licence and the country districts for Prohibition.

The Temperance Party claim that 30,000,000 of the population of the United States are living under Prohibition; but notwithstanding, the country's Drink Bill mounts up year by year. This is no doubt due to the greater consumption of drink in the towns, which Local Option does not touch.

The most sanguine supporter of Local Option will admit that if the operation of such a law realises all his expectations

a great volume of drinking will still remain for treatment. Though comparatively little success has followed past efforts at legislative or public regulation of the traffic, it is not outside the bounds of reasonable hope that some system of control could be devised which would reduce the abuses of drinking to a minimum. Local Option, as has been admitted, may be of partial benefit, but some method of control is required for the traffic in the districts where Local Prohibition cannot be enforced. The great weakness of the position of the orthodox Temperance men is that they have no plan for dealing with the traffic except by Local Prohibition.

It is admitted that the opportunity to some extent makes the drinker; and when to the opportunity is added encouragement, we get a considerable amount of drinking which might be abolished if the opportunity and the encouragement were lessened. In recent years increasing attention has been given to the system of sale, in connection with its effect on drunkenness. In this and in other countries experiments have been made on the lines of "disinterested management"; that is the sale of liquor without the incentive of private profit. What is known as the Scandinavian system was the pioneer on these lines, and although it had to grope its way in the dark it has on the whole achieved a very striking success. Largely as a result of this system in the towns, and Local Option in the country districts, Norway and Sweden have been changed from the most drunken to among the most temperate countries in Europe.

The movement for the company control of public houses somewhat on the lines of the Scandinavian method has made some progress in Great Britain. It must be admitted that the Trust in this country has worked under great difficulties. The Trust has no statutory authority or powers other than those of the ordinary licensee. It has no monopoly, and it is not in association with the local authority, nor has it the support of a strong public sympathy. The declared intention of the advocates of "Disinterested Management" is to eliminate personal and private interest in the sale of liquor. In practice it does not do this, because the usual financial basis of a Trust company is the payment of a maximum dividend of 5 per cent. with provision for depreciation and sinking fund in addition. The Trust thus offers a good commercial investment. This is one of two fatal features of the British Trust system, the other being that having only a few public houses widely separated no effective supervision is possible.

The Trust system cannot be supported as either practicable or desirable. It is opposed to the whole tendency of democratic government, which is not to relegate public businesses to private associations, however good may be the intentions of the latter. No scheme of control of the retail liquor shops

could be disinterested which permitted a few private individuals to finance it and to take profits from it. The removal of the evils of drinking is not going to be done without some sacrifice. The community alone can afford to make that sacrifice; only it can afford to face temporary financial loss for the sake of future social gain.

The incentive of gain is the motive of all private business. Profits depend upon sales. It is so in the liquor trade. The brewer and the publican are not in business to ruin their fellows. They are there to make profit, and unfortunately the more profit they make the more ruin they spread. This incentive of gain is a great difficulty in the way of effectively regulating the drink traffic. The customer with the drink appetite, the publican and brewer with the desire to make money, form a trinity of conspirators to defeat the object of regulation.

The liquor traffic is one which in the interests of the community should not be encouraged. Therefore it is obviously foolish to allow it to remain in the hands of people who have no motive for being in the trade except to push it for profit. The public must provide for the satisfaction of the demand for liquor in moderation, so long as the people consider moderate drinking to be a legitimate and reasonable thing. Therefore the public, instead of merely licensing the traffic, should control and conduct it wholly without the incentive of profit. In other words, the retail trade in liquor should be in the hands of the municipality.

Municipalisation of the Drink Traffic is not put forward as a complete and final solution of the drink problem. Municipalisation is put forward as a scheme for effecting reform in that proportion of drinking and drunkenness which is due to facilities and the method of supply. When Local Option and the statutory reduction of licences have done all they can there will remain a good many public houses, and Socialists contend that these can be conducted most satisfactorily under municipal control.

Parliament should lay down the broad lines on which the Municipalisation of the Drink Traffic shall be carried out; but inside these it is most important that liberty to experiment, liberty to make mistakes, liberty to rectify them, should be allowed to the locality. Above all else we want, in connection with the treatment of the drink traffic, that experience which alone can come from actual test.

Recent experience has shown that the great difficulty in the way of licensing reform is the question of compensation. If the community were to take over the ownership and management of the retail trade it would give compensation to the present interests on ordinary commercial lines, not as an admission of the legal or moral right of "the trade" to compensation, but because that was the line of least resistance, and

because the community could very well afford to do it. Mr. Chamberlain, in his proposal for the municipalisation of the trade in Birmingham, claimed that the market value might be given for all existing licences, and after allowing for reduction of consumption and the payment of interest on borrowed capital, the profits would leave sufficient to pay off all loans in ten years' time.

The elimination of private interest in the sale of drink demands that the servants in the municipal public houses shall have no incentive to push the sale. If the public and the Council have imbibed the essential idea of municipal liquor control, namely, that success is to be measured in losses and not in profits on the drink, there will be little difficulty in gaining the sympathetic co-operation of the servants.

It is impossible to do more within the limits of this pamphlet than to enumerate without comment some of the many benefits which might be expected from the municipalisation of the drink traffic.

It would place the control of the traffic completely in the hands of the people of the locality. It would be Local Option in the most complete sense.

It would ensure that the traffic which remained after Local Option had done all it could to reduce facilities, would be carried on free from the incentive of private gain.

It would remove the influence of the liquor interest from politics, as there would be no class with personal financial interests in the trade.

It would give a much to be desired liberty to local authorities to experiment and to meet local sentiment in regard to hours of opening and closing, Sunday closing, closing on election days, and conditions as to the sale of liquor to young persons.

It would ensure the respectable conduct of all licensed premises, and would dissociate gambling and immorality from such places.

It would give back to the community any profits which might be made, and these would be used to counteract the drink temptation.

It would ensure better conditions of labour to persons employed in the trade.

It is a scheme in harmony with all the economic and social tendencies of the times, which point to the wisdom of public control as the means to eliminate the admitted evils of private profit-making.

It is a scheme which—by frankly recognising that the demand for drink must be met—proposes to meet it in such a way as to satisfy all reasonable desire while preventing excessive indulgence.

It is a scientific and harmonious scheme of temperance.

reform, which, while adapted to present needs, is capable of progressive re-adaptation with the growth of public sentiment on the question.

Opponents of Municipalisation bring forward a number of objections, but none of them is of a fatal character. The proposal is one eminently calculated to appeal to all reasonable men of all classes—the men who while prepared to support any proposal which may lessen excessive drinking, are not willing to restrict the traffic so as to make it next to impossible to satisfy a reasonable desire. The proposal has the support of many who are not Socialists, among whom is Lord Peel, the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Licensing.

The concentration of the retail sale of liquor in the hands of the community would probably lead to the municipal or national control of the sources of supply. The sale of liquor in clubs would require to be strictly regulated; but with ample facilities for social recreation, provided by the municipality, the need for private institutions of such a character would almost disappear.

The Drink Question, as has been pointed out, is a part of the industrial and social problem. In so far as we elevate the ideals of the people, lessen the strenuousness of commercial and industrial life, improve the surroundings of the poor, increase their leisure and provide rational entertainment, shall we be working effectively for Temperance Reform.

At the same time, much may be done directly by lessening the temptations which the existence of too many public houses offers, and by removing all private financial interest from the system of sale.

There is, too, the wide and fruitful field of personal appeal and personal effort. The ravages of the drink evil are so terrible and so widespread that every teacher, preacher, and social reformer should make it a part of his work to spread knowledge of the destructive effects of drinking, and by example, precept, and help, try to save the unknowing and the weak from falling victims to this awful curse.

These three form the trinity of Temperance Reforms—Social Reform, Public Control, and Personal Effort.

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